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THE NATIONS¹
A MASQUE SYMBOLIZING THE TRIUMPH OF DEMOCRACY
OVER SOVEREIGNTY

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SYNOPSIS OF THE SCENES

Scene 1 represents Democracy in her search for a "haven sure in every clime." Sovereignty, however, with his attendants still holds sway over the minds of many peoples, and one nation in particular—France. Through the Reign of Terror, typified by the Carmagnole Dance, France awakens to accept Democracy, and so Sovereignty with his retinue yields to the greater spirit.

Scenes 2 and 3 represent a benighted country, Russia, under the power of autocracy, but even in the seemingly complete subjection to authority there is in the minds of a few people a faint perception of the truth. Over the general mass, however, Sovereignty is master; Democracy is incomprehensible. As in France, War is the teacher, and on the bloody fields of battle the peasants of Russia see a vision of Democracy, faint to be sure, but one to which they even now are turning.

In scene 4 the children of Democracy assemble for one great quest. A nation entangled by all the wiles of Sovereignty and his court calls for aid. Every nation pledges her loyalty and support to save Democracy in this great crisis. The call reaches America, who with her young manhood answers the summons.

¹ The actual time for presenting this masque was thirty minutes. The time can very easily be lengthened into one hour by longer musical and dancing periods. Because the masque was a part of the commencement exercises of the Englewood High School, the time for the performance was shortened so as not to prolong the exercises too much.

The masque was written for the graduating class of the high school by Miss Peabody, of the English department; the music was arranged by Miss Curry, of the music department; and the dances were arranged by Miss Maine, Physical Director.

LIST OF CHARACTERS

Democracy	Russian Peasants
Sovereignty	Red Cross Nurses
War	The Nations
Attendants of Sovereignty	Soldiers
Carmagnole Dancers	

MUSIC

Theme for Democracy	"Morning Mood," <i>Peer Gynt</i> , Suite I, Grieg
Theme for Sovereignty	"Land Sighting," Grieg
Theme for War	"Funeral March," Mendels- sohn
Theme for Battlefield	"Death of Asa," <i>Peer Gynt</i> , Grieg
Dance of Attendants of Sovereignty	"Le Tambourin," Old French Folk Dance
Carmagnole Dance	"La Carmagnole," from period of French Revolution
Music for Russian Peasants	"Ballad of Kremlin," Siberian Prison Song attributed to Vanka Kaina; prisons of Karijsk. "Volga Boat Song," Russian Folk Tune
The national airs of the various countries including the new "Hymn of Free Russia" and "America's Message"	

STAGE SETTING

The stage is draped in gray outing flannel, which makes a most effective background for the large flags and the white robes of the Nations as well as for the gorgeous costumes of the King and his court. There is a special chorus for the Carmagnole Dance and the Russian scenes and the national airs, costumed in accordance with the periods represented. War is dressed in conventional war costume with bare arms and legs suggesting brute force.

The stage is entirely free of furniture except a conventional seat for Democracy in the first scene. In the last scene the Nations are grouped. The flags carried by the Nations are large ones, 5×8 feet, on stands.

The lighting of the scenes requires care. For scene 1 full lights are used. For the Russian Peasant scene a dim stage is best, e.g., blue footlights and dimmed overlights. In the battle scene all lights are out except very dim overlights. There is barely light enough to distinguish the soldiers, but the flash-lights of the Red Cross nurses reveal enough.

SCENE I

The curtain rises, revealing Democracy alone on the stage (center). Music is played softly, fitting the sentiment of the scene. Democracy is dressed in pure white with a wreath upon her head. She looks despondent and tired. As she speaks the same soft air is played:

For many years I've journeyed o'er this world
To seek and find a dwelling-place in every clime;
But yet I wander, for my soul well knows
Still other voices faintly calling me.
My heart fears—I know not what—
My soul is faint; my spirit dreads the throes
Of mortal agony that sounds afar to me. . . .
But here I'll wait—perhaps some friend will come
And aid my faltering footsteps to a haven sure.

She sits wearily down (front left) and presently falls asleep as the music sounds drowsily. Suddenly the music breaks into a loud imperial air as Sovereignty enters (lower right) accompanied by gorgeously dressed attendants. They are Greed, Ignorance, Flattery, Punishment, Rumor, Extravagance, each with appropriate symbols: Greed with money bags; Flattery with fan; Rumor with a bag containing bits of paper to scatter; Ignorance with clanking chains; Punishment with a whip; Extravagance with jewelry. With pomp and much ceremony Sovereignty passes to the front of the stage and gazes imperiously around. Sovereignty speaks:

My friends, let's pause in this sequestered spot;
 Methinks we need a respite from the vulgar.
 Come, now, my weary eyes to entertain
 That I may rest.
 Ah me! why need I bend and bow
 To lowly herd; for I am of a finer
 Fire and should not touch the clay.
 Dance for me! your Sovereign speaks.
 Forget not that omnipotent am I!

His attendants dance for him a beautiful dance in which he takes much pleasure. Suddenly a loud, tumultuous rout dressed as the French Revolutionists bursts upon the scene (upper left). The Revolutionists swoop down upon the attendants, threatening them and tearing at their symbols. They crouch in fear by Sovereignty. The theme of the music is stormful. Sovereignty speaks:

What mean ye, frenzied crew, to trouble me?
 How came ye here? Speak! Sovereignty calls!

A burst of mocking laughter comes from the crowd. The mad crew dance the Carmagnole before Sovereignty, disregarding him as he stands with his retinue grouped in fear about him. They sing and dance swooping in menace toward the king. Suddenly they stop their wild dance and start toward the royal party as if about to commit some violence. Just then Democracy awakens. With fear and amazement expressed upon her face and with hands imploring, she gazes upon the maddened horde. She calls:

O men, O men, what means this uproar?

The mob turns wonderingly. Uncomprehendingly they gaze upon her. Slowly and fearfully they approach Democracy, and as she speaks they drop one by one to their knees. Sovereignty and his retinue also draw nearer. Amazement is expressed upon their faces and they too seem trying to apprehend the vision. Then one red-coated man speaks:

Fair vision in this night, we have sought for thee.
 O thee, O spirit bright, our eyes have longed to see;
 'Twas said to us in ages dim,
 A glimpse of thee in centuries past foretold—
 And we have traveled far to find thee here.
 Lead us beyond this tumult and this din,
 We kneel to thee!

The French people are bowed in reverence; Sovereignty and his retinue are looking upon the scene in amazement. Then Democracy speaks:

I'll come to live with ye a while
Till duty bids me search the world again.
I'll teach ye how to prize the greatest thing
Man knows on earth—his liberty.
And with this banner over us
We shall live for peace and for fraternity.

As she speaks she lifts up a beautiful silk French flag which has been inconspicuously lying upon the seat. The crowd arises. They express adoration and reverence for the flag, some touching the folds softly. The "Marseillaise" is softly played as Democracy leads the smiling and softly singing people from the stage; Sovereignty, too, with his train proffering their symbols, yields to the greater spirit.

SCENE 2

A desolate field. A man, uncouth and bent, is resting upon his scythe, gazing at the ground. He sighs as he starts ploddingly to work. Another peasant joins him and then several others, men and women, all looking like hard-handed people of the soil. They have various working implements and each slowly starts to work. The first man, younger than the rest, tries to receive some recognition from his companions, but they are apparently unable to comprehend the friendliness and more intelligent action of the younger man. The music is dead and monotonous. Suddenly as if a vision presented itself to the younger peasant, he looks about him as if to communicate a message to his fellow-beings. They creep nearer to him as if to hear. In an instant Rumor flits in and flies from one peasant to another. They immediately start back to work. Then at once Sovereignty and his train sweep onto the stage (upper left). The peasants prostrate themselves. The attendants of Sovereignty laugh and gaze arrogantly at the men and women bowed upon the ground. Finally the king passes on and the peasants slowly arise and stand gaping after the royal party. From the opposite side Democracy enters:

Would ye hearken unto me?

The peasants look at her uncomprehendingly, and finally each starts to work. One only, the young peasant, moves imploringly toward her. She beckons them and one or two half turn as if to follow but stop and begin their work. She looks upon them pityingly:

I'll send my teacher to ye.

In sadness she leaves the stage while the peasants stupidly go on working. The scene is dreary and dull. The music accentuates the misery of it all. Suddenly a loud clang is heard as War rushes on, blazing and imperious. With flashing sword he herds the men and women before him. The music is martial and furious.

Arise, ye men of earth, the trumpet calls;

War, red and gory, calls ye one by one!

To arms! to arms! your sovereignty to save.

Dropping their implements they huddle before War as he starts driving them before him. At that moment Democracy enters (upper left). She smiles wanly as she watches War hurling the peasants before him:

O world so full of tumult and strife!

O land so bowed with woe,

O men of earth—it must be thus

That right may triumph.

But from this field of blood perhaps you may emerge

And see me waiting here to save.

SCENE 3

It is night. Soldiers are lying huddled together. There is a faint sound of clanking musketry. Two Red Cross nurses enter carrying flash-lights, apparently looking for the wounded. Their flashes reveal powder-stained faces, weary and wan. They lift the head of a wounded man and hold a cup to his lips. In various ways they minister to the wounded. Two Red Cross men come in and bear a wounded man from the field on a stretcher. Suddenly the theme of the music passes from the mournful tone into the beautiful strains that always signify the nearness of Democracy. And then there is revealed the white form of Democracy holding a Red Cross flag in her hands. Slowly and gradually the men become conscious of her presence. They turn gropingly toward her, and when she speaks they stretch out their hands imploringly. Some rise to

sitting postures with outstretched hands; others attempt to crawl toward the vision:

Now would ye follow me?

The chorus begin to sing softly the national hymn of Free Russia as the curtain falls.

SCENE 4

As the curtain rises Democracy is shown in the midst of all her children. All the nations of the earth who are engaged in the great fight for democracy are represented, each with a large and beautiful flag. England with all her colonies, Brazil, Cuba, and all the others, each country being represented by a girl in white Greek costume, carrying the flag of the nation. Democracy speaks:

'Tis here we meet, my children all,
Ye have learned my lesson faithfully;
Now one quest more. . . .
But well I know that ye will aid me now.

At this moment France enters with her arm around Belgium; Democracy welcomes her warmly:

Welcome, dauntless France, beloved among nations, welcome.
And thou too, sorely tried and valiant Belgium, welcome.

The nations raise their flags in salute as she welcomes each newcomer. Russia enters.

And Russia, faltering yet true, welcome.

Then Democracy looks upon her children grouped about her. She feels the agony of the great task she is about to impose upon them all. But they stand expectant, obedient:

My children all, my task is almost done;
Yet one more is calling me to heed her cries.
O friends I need you
Your hearts must be with me in this great task of mine.
.
This people low are bent—their souls most tried;
I hear them call. Ah me!
But the way lies through a field of blood
And snares are set and pits and treachery.
I almost fail. I falter, so heartsick am I
To force this one great task upon ye all,
My children
Will ye fight to save me from the fall?

With one accord the nations raise their banners in salute and cry
as if in one voice:

We fight for thee! We fight for thee!

At that moment, as if in answer to a clarion call, America enters:

Who calls me? I hear afar a voice.

Democracy smiles in welcome as she says to America:

I hoped for thee, but so far distant thou

I feared thou couldst not hear the call.

America replies:

Democracy, thy call reached to the stars!

All sisters we to aid thee;

And this fair world of ours we'll render safe

For thee and thine.

I have brought to thee the Stars and Stripes!

As she speaks the last words the music is the sound of drums and a company of soldiers march across the stage and take up their position, flanking the Nations on both sides. They assume correct position for salute to flag as America steps more to center of the grouping. Then the music bursts into the "Star-Spangled Banner" and the people on the stage and the audience take up the song.